

Comprehensive Housing Policy

Housing & Community
Services Department

September 22, 2015



Today's Presentation

- Present an overview of the Comprehensive Housing Policy
- Introduce concepts for future Council consideration

Housing Policy - Purpose

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- Provide a framework for City policy decisions relative to affordable housing by:
 - Identifying current conditions
 - Barriers
 - Strategies

Process

- The starting point was the previous housing policy (2006)
- HCSD staff reviewed additional studies and documents
- A draft policy document was prepared for internal review
- Draft policy document was presented to stakeholders mentioned as potential partners in the document, for feedback (August 27, 2015)
- Comprehensive Housing Policy was revised and updated with feedback from all sources

Mission

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... to provide housing and related services to benefit the citizens and neighborhoods of Wichita

Vision

- **The City of Wichita and its housing partners envision the housing environment in Wichita will:**
 - Provide safe, affordable housing and basic shelter for all people
 - Eliminate blight in neighborhoods
 - Develop housing in established neighborhoods (in-fill)
 - Use a coordinated approach to housing that is balanced between enhancing established neighborhoods and creating new developments
 - Involve collaboration between city, county, state and federal government, as well as for-profit businesses and nonprofit agencies
 - Promote the availability of housing services and programs in Wichita

Community Investments Plan

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- The Comprehensive Housing Policy incorporates housing and neighborhood principles from the 2015-2035 Community Investments Plan
- In particular the Plan's Guiding Policy Principle is closely aligned with the Comprehensive Housing Policy Mission and Vision:
“Provide for Balanced Growth but with Added Focus on Our Established Neighborhoods.”

Policy Organization

- Housing is reviewed from four perspectives:
 1. Housing Affordability
 2. Housing Availability
 3. Neighborhood Stability
 4. Resources

Key Conclusions - Affordability

- Access to affordable housing is difficult for persons with insufficient income to rent or purchase safe housing and those whose income is above eligibility for most programs but who may need assistance
- Transportation is an important component of the cost of housing, especially for low-income persons
- Zoning codes which require large lots for single-family home construction result in all costs being passed on to a single buyer
- Community attitudes toward affordable housing, which are often based on unsubstantiated fears, limit the options for locating affordable housing

Top Recommended Strategies: Affordability

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- Research and develop alternative housing materials and methods
- Increase allowable housing density
- Implement strategies to educate and overcome public perception of who lives in affordable housing
- Continue to subsidize first time homebuyers with downpayment and closing costs assistance
- Continue infill/new construction programs
- Continue boarded up building project

Key Conclusions - Availability

- There are at least 11 special populations which require special consideration/accommodations in their housing choices
- Affordable housing with support services is a common theme that crosses many of the special populations
 - Persons with disabilities, single heads of households, veterans, unaccompanied youth, homeless, ex-offenders, current and past substance abusers
- Availability of housing for special populations also often encounters neighborhood opposition, just as is the case with affordable housing in general

Top Recommended Strategies: Housing Availability

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- Create public-private partnerships
- Establish cost-sharing between the City and developers
- Provide home repair upgrades
- Strengthen neighborhood watch programs
- Expand community policing
- Institute a rental registration program
- Engage lending institutions in aggressive community development
- Establish a task force to consider housing strategies for all special needs populations

Key Conclusions – Neighborhood Stability

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- Neighborhood stability will be enhanced by identifying areas of focus (the Community Investments Plan uses the term ‘opportunity’) for investment of resources to support neighborhood stability
- Options include focusing on the worst neighborhoods first OR addressing the needs of areas that are on the verge of decline
- Neighborhoods are strengthened by economic investment
- All residents regardless of income or special needs, will benefit from having a variety of housing choices

Top Recommended Strategies: Neighborhood Stability

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- Identify a new and continuing funding source (federal funds are not enough)
- Amend KSA 12-1760 to allow cities to condemn property more expeditiously
- Reduce inventory of vacant lots through infill home-ownership construction
- Actively pursue property liens and seizures
- Create an online database to inventory and market vacant & abandoned lots
- Encourage non-profits to develop housing on vacant land
- Continue paint and low-interest home repair loan programs

Key Conclusions - Resources

- Federal funds are not sufficient for long term investment in affordable housing
- More non-federal cash needs to be made available for the development of single-family housing
- Non-cash incentives for the development of affordable housing in general and in specific designated areas, are as important as cash assistance

Top Recommended Strategies: Resources

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- Investigate, evaluate and support the use of other funding mechanisms that have not been utilized to leverage current resources for housing development projects
- Encourage the development of lender programs that assist in the leveraging of HOME funding for down payments, closing costs, and first mortgage financing
- Establish a Housing Trust Fund to leverage City HOME funding (HOME-eligible match)

Acknowledgements

- This Comprehensive Housing Policy was created with input from numerous stakeholders including:
- City Manager's Office, MABCD, Planning, Police, Park & Recreation, Transit, Wichita State University, CHDOs, Domestic Violence Service Providers, Shelters, Neighborhoods, State Probation, Realtors, Sedgwick County Departments on Aging and Housing, Health Agencies, Children's Services, and the Veteran's Administration

Appendix Focus

- Stakeholder discussions did not focus on information in the Appendix but several entries are key to implementation of certain Housing Policy strategies:
- Follow-up steps should include review of the following strategy tools which are in the Appendix:
 - Redevelopment Authority
 - Land Bank
 - Inclusionary Zoning

Next Steps

- Series of workshops will be scheduled to discuss each of the four policy themes in more detail
- Staff will incorporate input from follow-up workshops to confirm and prioritize implementation strategies
- City Manager may name a team to develop and implement Council-identified priority strategies
- Long-range follow-up will likely involve financing decisions in the preparation of annual budgets

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